

Message Text

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ACTION LAB-04

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FM AMEMBASSY DACCA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4754
INFO USMISSION GENEVA

C O N F I D E N T I A L DACCA 2785

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PORG, PLAB, ILO, BG
SUBJECT: PRESENTATION OF AIDE MEMOIRE CONCERNING INTERNATIONAL
LABOR CONFERENCE; COMPOSITION OF BDG DELEGATION

REF: A. STATE 102699 B. STATE 103404 C. STATE 104945

1. AMBASSADOR DISCUSSED WITH THE FOREIGN SECRETARY MAY 17
THE IMPORTANCE TO THE UNITED STATES OF THE GENEVA
INTERNATIONAL LABOR CONFERENCE (ILC) AND OUTLINED THE
POINTS EXPRESSED IN REFTELS. POLITICAL COUNSELOR AND
LABOR REPORTING OFFICER MAY 16 PRESENTED AN AIDE MEMOIRE ON
THE SUBJECT TO THE DIRECTOR GENERAL FOR THE AMERICAS AT THE
MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS, AND ON MAY 23, AGAIN PRESENTED
THE SAME DOCUMENT TO THE LABOR SECRETARY, A.M. MESBAHUDDIN,
AND THE DIRECTOR GENERAL OF THE BUREAU OF MANPOWER, A.M.A.H.
SIDDIQUI, BOTH OF WHOM WILL REPRESENT THE BDG IN GENEVA.

2. THE TWO BANGLADESHI LABOR MINISTRY OFFICIALS LISTENED
ATTENTIVELY AND ASKED MANY QUESTIONS DURING THE PRESENTATION
OF THE AIDE MEMOIRE. THEY WERE SYMPATHETIC TO THE U.S.
POSITIONS AND SAID THAT IT WOULD BE "CATASTROPHIC" IF THE
U.S. WERE TO WITHDRAW FROM THE ILO. TO THE EXTENT
POSSIBLE, THE BDG WOULD SUPPORT THE USG, THEY SAID, BUT
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ON SPECIFIC ISSUES, SUCH AS WHICH COMMITTEE WOULD RECEIVE
THE ARTICLE 17 AMENDMENT, THE BDG WOULD BE GUIDED BY THE
DECISIONS OF THE ASIAN BLOC AND THE GROUP OF 77. THE
TWO OFFICIALS ASKED FOR A COPY OF THE U.S. AMENDMENT, WHICH
WAS PROVIDED FROM MATERIALS DISTRIBUTED AT THE NEW DELHI
LABOR CONFERENCE.

3. BOTH MEN, HOWEVER, CAUTIONED THAT BANGLADESH COULD BE BOXED IN IF ONE OF THE ARAB STATES TABLED A RESOLUTION ON ISRAEL. BANGLADESH AS A MUSLIM MAJORITY COUNTRY (AND ONE WHOSE ECONOMIC DEMANDS ON OIL-RICH ARABS ARE GREAT) WOULD BE UNABLE TO VOTE AGAINST SUCH A RESOLUTION AND BE SEEN PUBLICLY AS BREADING ISLAMIC SOLIDARITY.

4. IN PASSING, THEY SUGGESTED THAT THERE COULD BE USEFUL DISCUSSION IN GENEVA ON OTHER MATTERS RELATING TO THE STRUCTURE OF THE ILC, INCLUDING THE NEED FOR MEETINGS LESS FREQUENTLY AND OTHER COST SAVING PROCEDURAL MATTERS AND THE EXPENDITURE OF A GREATER PORTION OF THE BUDGET ON LABOR DEVELOPMENT AND LESS ON OVERHEAD.

5. IN ADDITIONAL TO THE ABOVE TWO BDG OFFICIALS, THE BDG DELEGATION WILL INCLUDE ABUL BASHAR FROM THE JATIYA SRAMIK (NATIONAL WORKERS) FEDDRATION AND ANISUDDOULA, PRESIDENT OF THE BANGLADESH EMPLOYERS' ASSOCIATION. THE DELEGATION WILL BE BACK-STOPPED BY TWO MEMBERS OF THE BANGLADESH MISSION IN GENEVA. THE SECRETARY OF LABOR, MESBA-HUDDIN, SEEMS TO BE A QUIET AND RATHER UNASSERTIVE BUREAU-CRAT, WHEREAS THE MANPOWER DIRECTOR GENERAL, SIDDIQUI, SEEMS TO BE MORE DYNAMIC AND KNOWLEDGEABLE ABOUT ILO MATTERS, HAVING ONCE SERVED AT THE ILO REGIONAL OFFICE IN BANGKOK. DURING HIS PAKISTAN DAYS, HE ALSO RECEIVED SOME MANPOWER TRAINING IN WASHINGTON AND SPEAKS FONDLY OF THE EXPERIENCE. BASHAR, THE LABOR DELEGATE, IS PRESIDENT OF ONE FACTION OF THE JATIYA SRAMIK FEDERATION (JSF), A LABOR FRONT OF A SMALL AND INSIGNIFICANT LEFTIS PARTY, CONFIDENTIAL

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THE NATIONAL PEOPLES' LIBERATION UNION (JAGMUI). THE JSF HAS ORGANIZED SOME OF THE MACHINE TOOL WORKERS IN THE DACCA AREA, BUT OF THE TWENTY UNIONS REPRESENTING THE WORKERS JSF HAS CONTROL OF ONLY SIX OR SEVEN. THE REPRESENTATIVE OF THE EMPOLYERS, ANISUDDOULA, IS THE MANAGING DIRECTOR OF BANGLADESH OXYGEN, LTD. AND PRESIDENT OF THE NARAYANGANJ CHAMBER OF COMMERCE. MASTERS

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